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ABSTRACT

In 1998 for the first time, the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) administered a writing assessment at the state level. This report describes the writing achievement of Nebraska eighth-grade students in nonpublic schools and compares their overall performance to students in the Central region of the United States and the nation (using data from the NAEP national assessments). In Nebraska, 354 students from 21 nonpublic schools were assessed. The writing assessment questions asked for three major kinds of writing: some required narrative, some informative, and some persuasive writing. Each student who participated in the state assessment was given two questions and had 25 minutes to respond to each question. The questions asked students to write in a variety of forms, such as essays, letters, stories, as well as to a variety of audiences, such as teachers, other students, and school boards. The average writing proficiency of eighth-grade nonpublic school students in Nebraska on the NAEP writing scale was 165 compared to 167 nationwide. (RS)

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NAEP 1998 Writing

STATE REPORT FOR NEBRASKA

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THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

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What is The Nation's Report Card?

THE NATION'S REPORT CARD, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Since 1969, assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, geography, and other fields. By making objective information on student performance available to policymakers at the national, state, and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement is collected under this program. NAEP guarantees the privacy of individual students and their families.

NAEP is a congressionally mandated project of the National Center for Education Statistics, the U.S. Department of Education. The Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible, by law, for carrying out the NAEP project through competitive awards to qualified organizations. NAEP reports directly to the Commissioner, who is also responsible for providing continuing reviews, including validation studies and solicitation of public comment, on NAEP's conduct and usefulness.

In 1988, Congress established the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to formulate policy guidelines for NAEP. The Board is responsible for selecting the subject areas to be assessed from among those included in the National Education Goals; for setting appropriate student performance levels; for developing assessment objectives and test specifications through a national consensus approach; for designing the assessment methodology; for developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating NAEP results; for developing standards and procedures for interstate, regional, and national comparisons; for determining the appropriateness of test items and ensuring they are free from bias; and for taking actions to improve the form and use of the National Assessment.

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NAEP 1998 Writing

STATE REPORT FOR NEBRASKA

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In collaboration with

Alfred Rogers

September 1999

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

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Due to the confidential nature of NAEP surveys, the photograph on the cover of this report does not portray actual students who participated in the NAEP writing assessment. All photographs used are from Comstock and PhotoDisc stock libraries.

The work upon which this publication is based was performed for the National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, by Educational Testing Service.

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SECTION 1 Overview of the NAEP Writing Assessment

What Is NAEP?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in the United States know and can do in various academic subjects. NAEP is authorized by Congress and directed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), an independent, bipartisan group, provides policy guidance for NAEP. In 1990, assessment at the state level was instituted on a voluntary basis. The NAEP assessments are administered to representative samples of students at the national level as well as at the state level for those states that choose to participate. The 1998 NAEP program included state-level assessments in reading at grades 4 and 8 and in writing at grade 8, and national-level assessments in civics, reading, and writing at grades 4, 8, and 12.

What Is Reported Here?

This marks the first time that the NAEP writing assessment has been administered at the state level. The assessment was administered at grade 8 in both public and nonpublic schools. However, Nebraska's public schools did not participate. Nonpublic school results for Nebraska are reported here, along with national and regional results for comparison.

This report provides basic information on NAEP and the overall results for nonpublic schools in tabular form. It describes the assessment, the sample of students assessed, the metrics for reporting student performance, and how the differences in performance are reported. In addition, Appendix A to this report, **Where to Find More Information**, describes the data available on the Web and provides information on sources of related data.

This report and its companion, the *NAEP 1998 Writing Report Card for the Nation and the States*,[1] provide a first look at the results of the NAEP 1998 writing assessment. Each participating jurisdiction receives its own customized *State Report* similar in format to this one. The *Writing Report Card* offers state-level data for all participating jurisdictions for which results are reported as well as details about technical aspects of the assessment. Summary data tables providing information for all jurisdictions for which public school results are reported are available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/, the NAEP Web site.

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[1] Greenwald, E.A., Persky, H.R., Campbell, J.R., & Mazzeo, J. (1999). *NAEP 1998 writing report card for the nation and the states* (NCES Publication No. 1999–459). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

What Was Assessed?

For each assessment in NAEP, the subject area content is developed through a congressionally mandated national consensus project. The objectives for each assessment are described in a document called the framework, which describes the subject area to be assessed and the kinds of questions that will be used to measure it.

The *Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress*[2] was first developed for the National Assessment Governing Board by the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) for the 1992 writing assessment. For the 1998 assessment, detailed guidelines for new kinds of questions and for new ways to score student writing were developed by American College Testing (ACT) and added to the framework. The *Writing Framework* reflects recent theories of writing, which view writing as an act of discovery for the writer as well as a way to communicate with readers.

The writing assessment questions asked for three major kinds of writing: some required narrative, some informative, and some persuasive writing. Each student who participated in the state assessment was given two questions and had 25 minutes to respond to each question. The questions asked students to write in a variety of forms, such as essays, letters, and stories, as well as to a variety of audiences, such as teachers, other students, and school boards.

In addition to requiring a variety of kinds of writing, the assessment provided many kinds of visual and written materials to stimulate students' writing. Some students were asked to write in response to questions that incorporated photographs or cartoons. Other questions incorporated poems or stories, so that students were responding to literature as they answered those questions. At grade 8, there were 20 writing questions. Seven of those questions (35%) asked for narrative writing, seven (35%) asked for informative writing, and six (30%) asked for persuasive writing. The framework specified that distribution as appropriate for eighth grade.

Who Was Assessed?

Selection of Schools and Students

For the NAEP state assessment, participating schools within a given jurisdiction and students in those schools were selected using probability sampling methods. These methods are described in the *Writing Report Card*. In Nebraska, 354 nonpublic school students from 21 schools participated in the 1998 state writing assessment.

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[2] National Assessment Governing Board. (1996). *Writing framework and specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: Author.

Participation Guidelines

To ensure comparability in a particular subject across all jurisdictions, NCES and NAGB have established guidelines for school and student participation rates. In order for assessment results to be reported, a jurisdiction must have its weighted participation rate for the initial sample of schools greater than or equal to 70 percent. The NAEP state assessment in writing was administered in both public and nonpublic schools at grade 8 in 1998; participation rates are calculated separately for these two samples. Only Nebraska's nonpublic schools participated, and the participation guidelines for reporting were met. Details on participation rates and guidelines for all participating jurisdictions can be found in Appendix A of the *Writing Report Card*.

Possible Sources of Bias in Reported Results

Within a certain state sample that meets the guidelines for publication of results, there still may exist possible sources of bias of the results due to nonparticipation of selected schools or due to nonparticipation of certain student groups. These possible sources of bias are indicated by notations and are specified and described in Appendix A of the *Writing Report Card*.

Participation by Students with Disabilities or who are Limited English Proficient

NAEP endeavors to assess all students selected in the randomized sampling process including students with disabilities (SD) as well as students who are beginning to learn English and are classified by their schools as limited English proficient (LEP). The guidelines used to classify students into these two categories vary from state to state. The percentages of students classified as SD or LEP in all participating states and jurisdictions are available in Appendix A of the *Writing Report Card*.

NAEP participation guidelines specify levels of SD/LEP student nonparticipation that put the sample at risk for nonresponse bias; however, all jurisdictions met these guidelines for the 1998 writing assessment.

NAEP offers certain accommodations for SD or LEP students who need them (for example, having the prompt read aloud or having extended time to respond), as described in the *Writing Report Card* and in a forthcoming report focusing on 1998 assessment results for SD and LEP students. However, school personnel make the ultimate decision as to whether or not a particular student should take the assessment and whether accommodations are needed. The table on the following page shows the percentage of students in Nebraska and the nation who were classified as SD or LEP in 1998, the percentage of students who were excluded from NAEP at the discretion of school personnel, and the percentage of SD or LEP students who were assessed with and without accommodations.

Grade 8 students who are classified as limited English proficient (LEP) or having disabilities (SD)

Percentage of all students who are:	Nebraska Nonpublic	Nation Nonpublic
Classified as LEP	1%	0%
Excluded from the assessment due to LEP	0%	0%
Classified as LEP and assessed with accommodations	1%	0%
Classified as LEP and assessed without accommodations	0%	0%
Classified as students with disabilities	2%	2%
Excluded from the assessment due to disability	0%	0%
Classified as SD and assessed with accommodations	2%	1%
Classified as SD and assessed without accommodations	0%	1%

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Writing Assessment.

How Are Results Reported?

In this report, as in other NAEP reports, only those results based on preestablished minimum sample sizes are reported. The results are reported in terms of two metrics—average scale scores and percentages of students at or above each achievement level (as well as the percentage below the *Basic* level). Descriptions of these two metrics follow. Further details can be found in the *Writing Report Card*.

The NAEP Writing Scale

Students' responses to a writing prompt were analyzed to determine the percentages of students falling into each of six score categories. That information from all the writing prompts was combined using item response theory (IRT) methodology to form a writing performance scale. One scale was developed that encompasses the three purposes for writing (narrative, informative, and persuasive writing) in the assessment. Each grade (4, 8, and 12) has its own scale ranging from 0 to 300 with a mean of 150 and a standard deviation of 35. This scale is the metric used to present the average scale scores and selected percentiles in this and other reports. Details on scaling procedures will be available in the forthcoming *Technical Report*.

The Writing Achievement Levels

In addition to the NAEP writing scale, results are also reported in terms of the writing achievement levels authorized by the NAEP legislation[1] and adopted by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The achievement levels are performance standards based on the collective judgments of a broadly representative panel that included teachers (55%), non-teaching educators (15%), and members of the general public (30%). These achievement levels reflect the panel's consensus as to what students should be expected to know and to do. Viewing students' performance from this perspective provides some insight into the adequacy of students' knowledge and skills and the extent to which they achieved expected levels of performance. NAGB reviewed and adopted the recommended achievement levels derived from the work of this panel.

[1] The National Education Statistics Act of 1994 requires that the National Assessment Governing Board develop "appropriate student performance levels" for reporting NAEP results.

For each grade tested, NAGB has adopted three achievement levels: *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. For reporting purposes, the achievement level cut scores for each grade represent the boundaries between four ranges on the NAEP writing scale: below *Basic*, *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. The policy definitions of the achievement levels are shown on the following page. The text of the descriptions of expected writing performance at each achievement level at grade 8 and the cut scores that divide the levels are shown in Figure 1.1 on page 6.

Definitions of the achievement levels

Basic	Partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade
Proficient	Solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.
Advanced	Superior performance

The NAEP legislation requires that the achievement levels be used on a developmental basis until the Commissioner of Education Statistics determines, as the result of a congressionally mandated evaluation by one or more nationally recognized evaluation organizations, that the achievement levels are "reasonable, valid, and informative to the public." Upon review of the available information, the Acting Commissioner agrees with the National Academy of Science recommendation that caution needs to be exercised in the use of the current achievement levels, since in the opinion of the Academy "... appropriate validity evidence for the cut scores is lacking; and the process has produced unreasonable results."[4] Therefore, the Acting Commissioner concludes that these achievement levels should continue to be considered developmental and should continue to be interpreted and used with caution. In a recent study, eleven testing experts who provided technical advice for the achievement-level-setting process responded to the NAS report.[5] The *Writing Report Card* contains further information on the developmental status of the achievement levels. The Acting Commissioner and NAGB believe that the achievement levels are useful for reporting the educational achievement of students in the United States.

The following achievement level descriptions focus on such aspects of writing as understanding of the task and audience, organization, use of details and elaboration, and commands of the mechanics of writing. The achievement level descriptions reflect what writers performing at each achievement level should be able to do. The achievement levels are cumulative from *Basic* to *Proficient* to *Advanced*. Each level builds on the previous level such that knowledge at the *Proficient* level presumes mastery of the *Basic* level, and knowledge at the *Advanced* level presumes mastery of both the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels.

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[4] Pelligrino, J. W., Jones, L. R., & Mitchell, K. J. (Eds.). (1999). *Grading the nation's report card: Evaluating NAEP and transforming the assessment of educational progress*. Committee on the Evaluation of the National and State Assessments of Educational Progress, Board on Testing and Assessment, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council. (p. 182). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

[5] Hambleton, R.K., Brennan, R.L., Brown, W., Dodd, B., Forsyth, R.A., Mehrens, W.A., Nellhaus, J., Reckase, M., Rindone, D., van der Linden, W.J., & Zwick, R. (1999). *A response to "Setting reasonable and useful performance standards" in the National Academy of Sciences' Grading the nation's report card*. Report available from the first author at Laboratory of Psychometric and Evaluative Research, University of Massachusetts, Hill House South Room 154, Amherst MA 01003. E-mail: rkh@educ.umass.edu.

FIGURE 1.1

Levels of Writing Achievement at Grade 8

The following statements describe the kinds of things eighth-grade students should be able to do in writing at each level of achievement. These statements should be interpreted with the constraints of the National Assessment of Educational Progress in mind. Student performance reported with respect to these descriptions are in response to two age-appropriate writing tasks completed within 25 minutes each. Students are not advised of the writing tasks in advance nor engaged in pre-writing instruction and preparation; however, they are given a set of "ideas for planning and evaluating" their writing for the assessment. Although the NAEP writing assessment cannot fully assess students' abilities to produce a polished piece of writing, the results do provide valuable information about students' abilities to generate writing in response to a variety of purposes, tasks, and audiences within a rather limited period of time. The portion in bold is a summary of the text following it.

BASIC LEVEL (114)

Eighth-grade students performing at the basic level should be able to produce an effective response within the time allowed that shows a general understanding of the writing task they have been assigned. Their writing should show that these students are aware of the audience they are expected to address, and it should include supporting details in an organized way.

Eighth-grade students performing at the basic level should be able to produce an effective response within the time allowed that shows a general understanding of the writing task they have been assigned. Their writing should show that these students are aware of the audience they are expected to address, and it should include supporting details in an organized way. The grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in the work should be accurate enough to communicate to a reader, although there may be mistakes that get in the way of meaning.

PROFICIENT LEVEL (173)

Eighth-grade students performing at the proficient level should be able to produce a detailed and organized response within the time allowed that shows an understanding of both the writing task they have been assigned and the audience they are expected to address. Their writing should include precise language and varied sentence structure, and it may show analytical, evaluative, or creative thinking.

Eighth-grade students performing at the proficient level should be able to produce an effective response within the time allowed that shows an understanding of both the writing task they have been assigned and the audience they are expected to address. Their writing should be organized, making use of techniques such as sequencing or a clearly marked beginning and ending, and it should make use of details and some elaboration to support and develop the main idea of the piece. Their writing should include precise language and some variety in sentence structure, and it may show analytical, evaluative, or creative thinking. The grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in the work should be accurate enough to communicate to a reader; there may be some errors, but these should not get in the way of meaning.

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FIGURE 1.1 (continued)

Levels of Writing Achievement at Grade 8

ADVANCED LEVEL (224)

Eighth-grade students performing at the advanced level should be able to produce a fully developed response within the time allowed that shows a clear understanding of both the writing task they have been assigned and the audience they are expected to address. Their writing should show some analytical, evaluative, or creative thinking and may make use of literary strategies to clarify a point. At the same time, the writing should be clearly organized, demonstrating precise word choice and varied sentence structure.

Eighth-grade students performing at the advanced level should be able to produce an effective and fully developed response within the time allowed that shows a clear understanding of both the writing task they have been assigned and the audience they are expected to address. Their writing should show some analytical, evaluative, or creative thinking, and should demonstrate precise word choice and varied sentence structure. Their work should include details and elaboration that support and develop the main idea of the piece, and it may make use of strategies such as analogies, illustrations, examples, anecdotes, or figurative language to clarify a point. At the same time, the writing should show that these students can keep their work clearly and consistently organized. Writing by eighth-grade students performing at the advanced level should contain few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. These writers should demonstrate good control of these elements and may use them for stylistic effect in their work.

How Are Performance Differences Reported?

In this report, statements that compare groups by using terms such as "higher" or "not significantly different" (e.g., "females scored higher than males") are based on the results of statistical tests. Because the percentages of students and the average writing scale scores presented in this report are based on samples—rather than on the entire population of eighth graders in a jurisdiction—the numbers reported are necessarily *estimates*. As such, they are subject to sampling error, a measure of uncertainty reflected in the *standard error*[6] of the estimate. When the percentages or average scale scores of certain groups are compared, it is essential to take the standard error into account rather than to rely solely on observed similarities or differences. The comparisons discussed in this report are based on statistical tests that consider both the magnitude of the differences between the averages or percentages and the standard errors of those statistics. The reader is cautioned to rely on the results of these statistical tests rather than simply on the size of any difference in scale scores or percentages in making inferences from the data.

The statistical tests determine whether the evidence—based on the data from the groups in the sample—is strong enough to conclude that there is an actual difference in the averages or percentages for those groups in the population. If the evidence is strong (i.e., the difference is statistically significant), the report describes the group averages or percentages as being different (e.g., one group performed *higher than* or *lower than* another group) regardless of the apparent size of the difference. If the evidence is not sufficiently strong (i.e., the difference is not statistically significant), the averages or percentages are described as being *not significantly different*—again, regardless of whether the sample averages or sample percentages appear to be about the same or widely discrepant.

[6] Standard errors measure the uncertainty that another sample drawn from the same population could have yielded somewhat different results.

Overall Writing Results for Nonpublic School Students

Presented below are results for Nebraska's eighth-grade nonpublic school students as compared to students in the Central region and nationwide. Additional results from the assessment can be found in the *Writing Report Card* and at http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/, the NAEP Web site.

Students' Overall Scale Scores

Table 1.1A shows the overall performance of Nebraska's nonpublic school students, as well as the overall performance for the Central region and the nation. The first column of results gives the average scale score on the NAEP 0–300 writing scale.

A broader and more delineated view of writing ability can be gained by looking at the scale scores across the performance continuum. The columns to the right of the average scale score show this distribution of scale scores by selected percentiles. An examination of the data at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, or 90th percentile can provide a picture of how closely the performance of Nebraska's students with lower or higher writing ability matches that of the region or the nation.

In terms of the average NAEP writing scale score for Nebraska's nonpublic school students, Table 1.1A shows the following.

- The average scale score for students in nonpublic schools in Nebraska was 165. This was not significantly different from that of eighth graders in nonpublic schools nationwide (167).

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TABLE 1.1A

Average writing scale scores and selected percentiles for nonpublic school students

	Average scale score	Scale score distribution				
		10th percentile	25th percentile	50th percentile	75th percentile	90th percentile
Nonpublic						
Nebraska	165 (4.7)	120 (8.6)	143 (6.5)	167 (9.2)	189 (4.8)	207 (5.0)
Central	169 (2.8)!	130 (4.9)!	149 (4.1)!	170 (2.7)!	190 (2.9)!	207 (3.8)!
Nation	167 (1.2)	128 (2.1)	147 (1.1)	168 (1.1)	188 (1.2)	205 (2.2)

The NAEP writing scale ranges from 0 to 300. The standard errors of the statistics appear in parentheses. ! Interpret with caution—the nature of the sample does not allow accurate determination of the variability of this statistic.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Writing Assessment.

Overall Results in Terms of Achievement Levels

Table 1.1B presents the percentages of students who performed below *Basic*, at or above *Basic*, at or above *Proficient*, and at *Advanced* levels. Because the percentages in the levels are cumulative from *Basic* to *Proficient* to *Advanced*, they sum to more than 100 percent. Only the percentage of students at or above *Basic* (which includes *Proficient* and *Advanced*) plus the percentage of students below *Basic* will always sum to 100 percent.

Table 1.1B indicates the following in terms of achievement levels attained by Nebraska's nonpublic school students.

- The percentage of nonpublic school eighth graders in Nebraska who performed at or above the *Proficient* level was 43 percent. This was not significantly different from that of nonpublic school students across the nation (44 percent).

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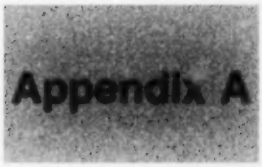
TABLE 1.1B

Percentages of students attaining achievement levels for nonpublic school students

	Below *Basic*	At or Above *Basic*	At or Above *Proficient*	*Advanced*
Nonpublic				
Nebraska	8 (3.0)	92 (3.0)	43 (5.8)	4 (2.2)
Central	4 (2.1)!	96 (2.1)!	46 (3.4)!	3 (1.1)!
Nation	4 (0.8)	96 (0.8)	44 (1.6)	3 (0.5)

The achievement levels correspond to the following points on the NAEP writing scale at grade 8: *Basic*, 114–172; *Proficient*, 173–223; and *Advanced*, 224 and above. The standard errors of the statistics appear in parentheses.
! Interpret with caution—the nature of the sample does not allow accurate determination of the variability of this statistic.
‡‡‡ Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Writing Assessment.



Where to Find More Information

Below are only a few suggestions for finding additional NAEP results and related information. A hyperlinked version of this section is available from the Web page that introduces the 1998 state reports, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/stt1998/1999463.shtml. Many of the reports and data files on the Web will require the use of the (free) Adobe Acrobat Reader; for information on installing the Reader, click on the *Help* button at the NAEP Web site, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/.

Details of the NAEP Writing Assessment

For details of the assessment, refer to the companion report, the *NAEP 1998 Writing Report Card for the Nation and the States*. Both that report and the *NAEP 1998 Writing State Reports* are available on the NAEP Web site. For details of the framework on which the writing assessment was developed, see http://www.nagb.org/. Click on the *Publications* button on the left, and then click on *Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress*.

Technical information about the assessment will be available in the *NAEP 1998 Technical Report* in 2000. Until that technical report is available, many questions may be answered by searching in the *Technical Report of the NAEP 1996 State Assessment Program in Science*, to be found at the NAEP Web site. The science assessment was also on a within-grade scale, so science scaling procedures would be more similar to writing than would the scaling procedures in the mathematics assessment (which was on a cross-grade scale).

1998 Participation Rates

Information on each jurisdiction's participation rates for schools and students is in Appendix A of the *Writing Report Card*, to be found at the NAEP Web site.

Additional Results from the Writing Assessment

For more findings from the 1998 writing assessments, refer to the 1998 results at the NAEP Web site. On the release date, the summary data tables (SDTs) at this site will include student, school, and teacher variables for all jurisdictions, the nation, and the four NAEP geographic regions. Complete SDTs will be available for all jurisdictions, with all background questions cross-tabulated with the major demographic reporting variables (for instance, hours of television watched by level of parental education or limited English proficiency by race/ethnicity).

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Variables Reported in the State Reports

The following variables can be found in the summary data tables (SDTs) at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/tables. More information on these variables is available in Appendix A of the *Writing Report Card* at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/, the NAEP Web site. The variables reported here, with their labels in the tables are:

- **Gender**. This is DSEX in the SDTs. Reports documenting or surveying gender differences in writing include *NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress* at the NAEP Web site, *The Condition of Education*, for instance, *Indicator 20* at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/ce/c9620a01.html, and *The ETS Gender Study* at ftp://etsis1.ets.org/pub/res/gender.pdf.
- **Race/Ethnicity**. This is DRACE in the SDTs. An instructive explanation of the derivation appears in Appendix A of the *Writing Report Card*, at the NAEP Web site.
- **Students' Reports of Parents' Highest Education Level**. PARED2 is a derived variable also described in Appendix A of the *Writing Report Card*. The effect of parental education is discussed in a paper by Grissmer, Kirby, Berends, and Williamson (1994) at http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR535/MR535.html.
- **Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Program Eligibility**. The variable reported here is SLUNCH1, which is a version of SLUNCH with several of the categories of SLUNCH (e.g., reduced and free) combined. A description of the free/reduced-price lunch program is available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/Default.htm.
- **Type of Location**. TOL3 is the label in the SDTs. The TOL variable uses data from the most recent and Quality Education Data (QED) file (see http://www.qeddata.com/) combined with the most recent Private School Survey PSS file (see http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss.html). The Common Core of Data (CCD) file (see http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/index.html) is used to extract type of location or urbanization information where missing from the QED file. Through this process, the TOL variable reflects the type of location values for the school recorded on the 1995/96 CCD and PSS files. Schools with missing values for type of location were assigned the TOL of other schools within the same city, when TOL did not vary within that city. Any remaining missing TOL values were assigned using U.S. Bureau of Census publications. Additional information is available under *General Information* on the NAEP SDT Tool Web pages and also in Chapter 3, Section 4, of the *Technical Report of the NAEP 1996 State Assessment Program in Mathematics* (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/96report/97951.pdf).
- **Type of School**. SCHTYPE is the label in the SDTs. Note that the *Nonpublic* school sample includes *Private* and *Catholic* school students. *BIA* (Bureau of Indian Affairs) and *DoDEA* (Department of Defense Education Activity) students are in the *Combined* sample only.

Publications from NAEP Writing Assessments

NAEP also offers various special reports on writing that may be of particular interest to teachers. These may be ordered from the source at the end of this section, and some of them can be accessed and printed from the Web.

- *Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, from the National Assessment Governing Board (available at http://www.nagb.org/)
- *NAEP 1998 Writing Report Card for the Nation and the States*, the companion to this State Report (available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/, the NAEP Web site)
- *The NAEP 1998 Writing Report Card National Highlights*, a brochure with student samples, covering the national and state NAEP 1998 writing assessment (available at the NAEP Web site)
- *NAEP 1999 Trends in Academic Progress*, containing samples of student writing from the NAEP Long-Term Trend assessment (forthcoming at the NAEP Web site)
- *NAEP Trends in Writing: Fluency and Writing Conventions*, a short report from the NAEP Long-Term Trend assessment (available at the NAEP Web site)
- *NAEPFacts: Can Students Benefit from Process Writing?* To read this short publication describing selected results from the *1992 Writing Report Card*, go to http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/ and enter 96845 in the box labeled "Enter NCES #."

Some special reports on reading may be of interest to language arts teachers:

- *Listening to Children Read Aloud, Data from NAEP's Integrated Reading Performance Record (IRPR) at Grade 4*, results from the 1992 IRPR, a special study conducted with a subgroup of fourth graders who participated in the 1992 NAEP reading assessment (available in print only)
- *Interviewing Children About their Literacy Experiences, Data from NAEP's Integrated Reading Performance Record (IRPR) at Grade 4*, results from the 1992 IRPR, a special study conducted with a subgroup of fourth graders who participated in the 1992 NAEP reading assessment (available in print only)
- *NAEPFacts: Listening to Children Read Aloud: Oral Fluency* To read this NAEPFacts, summarizing NAEP's first attempt to measure 4th graders' oral reading fluency, accuracy, and rate on a large-scale basis, go to http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/ and enter 95762 in the box labeled "Enter NCES #."
- *Students Selecting Stories: The Effects of Choice in Reading Assessment*, results from the NAEP Reader Special Survey of the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress (available at the NAEP Web site). To see this publication, go to http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/ and enter 97491 in the box labeled "Enter NCES #."

For ordering information on these reports, write:

U.S. Department of Education
ED Pubs
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794–1398
or call toll free 1–877–4 ED PUBS (1–877–433–7827)

NAEP reading reports in addition to those listed above are available at the NAEP Web site. For many of the publications, a free copy may be ordered on line. Go to http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/, enter the NCES publication number, or enter key words from the title and select National Assessment of Educational Progress in the "Search Options" box. If printed copies are available, the next page will have a link to "Order your free copy now from EdPubs."

Sample NAEP Questions for Classroom Use

All of the 1998 released items are available now in the *Writing Report Card*. The released items from the 1998 writing assessment will appear on the Web in the fall of 1999. They will join the released items from the NAEP 1998 reading assessment. The Sample Questions Tool presents questions, scoring guides, actual responses, and scores from released portions of NAEP assessments. To access this tool from the NAEP Web site, click on "Sample Questions." There is a tutorial for first time users.

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